

Washington, DC - Congressman Mark Kirk joined bipartisan Members of Congress representing states from the Great Lakes region in introducing the Great Lakes Oil and Gas Drilling Ban (H.R. 2930) that prohibits oil and gas drilling in or under the Great Lakes.

Statistics suggest that after 26 years worth of oil and gas extraction, the seven producing wells beneath the Great Lakes do not produce enough energy to fuel the nation's needs for even one day. In their entire lifetime, the directionally drilled wells under the U.S. side of the Great Lakes have only produced enough natural gas to fuel the U.S. for nine hours and enough crude oil to fuel the U.S. for 35 minutes.

Besides the lack of energy production, Kirk and other lawmakers said the region is susceptible to an oil spill, noting about 135 oil spills occur in the Great Lakes annually.

"All of this could be erased by a huge oil spill or natural gas fire from the Canadian side as well as the American side," said Kirk. "The Great Lakes supply 25% of the nation's drinking water. We must protect our most precious freshwater resource."

The Great Lakes Oil and Gas Drilling Ban is sponsored by Congressman Bart Stupak (D-MI) and has 15 co-sponsors. Kirk is one of three Republicans supporting the bill. Congress enacted a temporary ban on Great Lakes drilling in 2001 that was extended in 2003 and then again recently through 2007. Currently, Michigan, New York, Wisconsin, Illinois and Ohio have drilling bans in their states, but Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota do not.

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